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August 23, 1939
Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact

Falsifications About the Origins of the Second World War

- Dougal MacDonald -



Information picket organized by Youth for Democratic Renewal, against planned anti-communist monument, August 21, 2020, Ottawa.

The government of Canada declared August 23 Black Ribbon Day in 2009 to spread lies which blame the former Soviet Union for starting the Second World War. The Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler Germany on August 23, 1939 which the government of Canada claims was a "military alliance" to take joint military action against some third country. But the pact contained no such agreement. The agreement was only that the two countries would not attack each other.

Blaming the Soviet Union for starting the Second World War also serves to divert attention from the facts about the Munich Agreement the British and French signed with Hitler Germany on September 30, 1938 which gave Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland to Germany and the Hitlerites a green light to take over Czechoslovakia, invade Poland and unleash the war crimes and atrocities they carried out against the peoples of Europe during the Second World War.

Reactionaries today use the anniversary of the non-aggression pact not to acclaim the great victory of the world's people over Nazi Germany but to slander the great deeds of the Soviet Union by repeating claims which falsify history. To his shame, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on August 23, 2019 called the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact a "sombre anniversary" and said, "Signed between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in 1939 to divide Central and Eastern Europe, the infamous pact set the stage for the appalling atrocities these regimes would commit."

Equating the Soviet Union's unrelenting battle to defeat Nazi aggression with Nazi war crimes is for what purpose? In actuality, the two main factors leading to the Nazi Germany-initiated Second World War were the huge U.S. investments to rebuild the German economy, beginning with the 1924 J.P. Morgan-led U.S. Dawes Plan which financed the rebuilding of Germany's industries, especially their war industries, and the treacherous policy of appeasing Germany by renouncing collective security followed by Britain and France with the tacit agreement of Canada, while the U.S. was busy financing German war production.



Lies about the Soviet Union becoming an enemy of Canada because of the non-aggression pact began at the time of its signing, to cover up the agreement concluded at Munich on September 30, 1938, by Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. That agreement stipulated that Czechoslovakia must surrender its border regions and defences (the so-called Sudeten region) to Nazi Germany. German troops then occupied these regions between October 1 and 10, 1938.

In January 1948, the lies then took the form of full-blown Nazi propaganda about a so-called Soviet-German "alliance." The U.S. publication of material from the diaries of Hitlerite officials, in collaboration with the British and French foreign offices, started a fresh wave of slander and lies in connection with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact. We are to ignore that the German documents were all written from the standpoint of the Hitler government and were without independent verification. It was a deliberate Cold War campaign against the Soviet Union by the U.S. and its allies to cover up their own nefarious post war deeds.

The Soviet Union did not treat these lies lightly. The Soviet Information Bureau almost immediately published a very important document, *Falsifiers of History*, to refute them.[1] These same lies about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact should also not be treated with indifference today. They aim to present the values of those who are prompted by narrow ideological beliefs as Canadian values. In fact, the proponents of Black Ribbon Day are descendants of the very same Nazi forces that spread death and destruction across Europe. They present their forebears -- who were Nazi collaborators that sent Jews, Poles, Roma and many others to their deaths in concentration camps -- as freedom fighters because they fought against communism. Their values are not Canadian values.

There is no place for a monument in Ottawa in a space called the Garden of the Provinces and Territories, or anywhere else, which espouses these values based on narrow anti-communist ideological beliefs. Such values are precisely what Canadians fought against in the Second World War in defeating the Nazis. They sacrificed their lives to win freedom, democracy and peace. Their sons and daughters had nothing but admiration for the sacrifices of the communists led by the Soviet Union. To suggest we need a monument to the "victims of communism," not to the victims of Nazi-fascism and U.S. imperialist wars of aggression, coups d'état, sanctions and crimes against humanity since colonial times, is not worthy of Canada or what Canadians stand for.

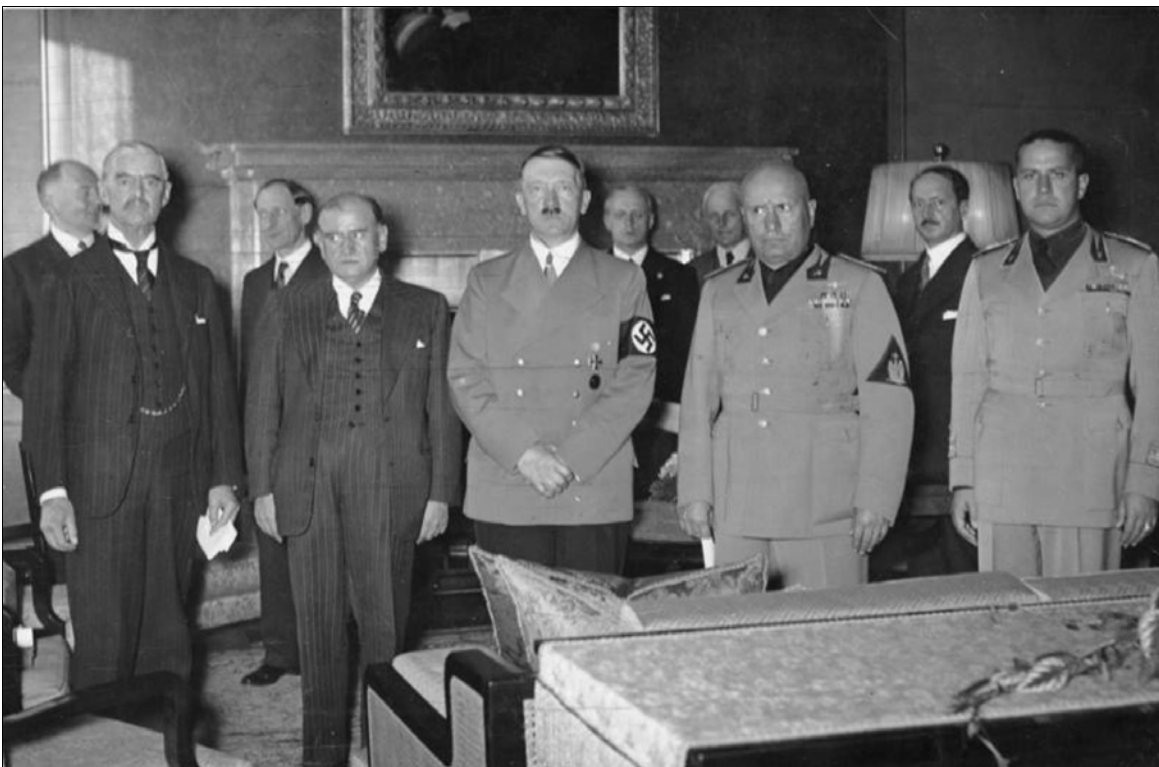
If signing a non-aggression pact in 1939 was "helping Hitler" then the British and French had already been "helping Hitler" since signing such pacts a year earlier and Poland had been "helping Hitler" since 1934. It is also significant that these same reactionaries never once mention the filthy pro-Nazi role of U.S. corporations such as Ford, General Motors, Standard Oil, Texaco, Dupont and ITT which supplied the Nazi war machine with essential equipment and

materials that enabled their invasion of Europe.[2]

Britain and France issued a joint declaration of non-aggression with Germany in 1938, not to mention a "Pact of Accord and Cooperation" signed in 1933 when Hitler came to power. Poland signed a non-aggression pact with the Nazis in 1934, five years before the Soviet Union did, yet this is never mentioned as a cause of war. Of all the non-aggressive Great Powers in Europe, the Soviet Union was the very last to agree to a pact with the Germans, a decision it was forced into by Britain and France's rejection of collective security.

The history of events in 1938 -- both before and after Hitler's occupation of Austria in March -- show that the Soviet Union, as it had done in earlier years, made many efforts to persuade Britain and France to maintain collective mutual assistance and in particular to carry out their undertaking to defend Czechoslovakia against aggression. The Soviet Union was not only willing to join forces with France to defend Czechoslovakia if France would keep her word, but was prepared to defend Czechoslovakia on her own, even if France refused.[3]

All the efforts by the Soviet Union to build collective security were shunned by the British, French and Americans. The British and French refused to sign any collective mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union because their rulers still hoped Germany would attack and destroy the Soviet Union. One last effort by the Soviet Union in April 1939 was again rejected, even though polls in both countries showed massive popular support for it. Instead, Britain and France had signed the traitorous September 30, 1938, Munich Pact with Germany and Italy which permitted Germany to dismember Czechoslovakia and incorporate the Sudetenland, ordered the Czechs not to resist Nazi aggression, and gave the Nazis the green light to launch their attacks across Europe.



Left to right: Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, Mussolini, and Ciano at signing of sellout Munich Agreement in 1938.

The reactionaries never want to discuss the Munich Pact because it was such a blatant betrayal of the world's people that even Winston Churchill accused Prime Minister Chamberlain in the British Parliament: "You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose

dishonour and you will have war." It is indisputable that faced with the British and French betrayal, the Soviet Union had no choice but to take whatever measures it could to defend itself and the cause of peace.

All these facts can be verified. They are all available in reports, speeches, accounts and documents of that time. One example of the policy of appeasement of Hitler is Memo #8604, sent to Moscow by Russian intelligence from Prague several days before the signing of the Munich Agreement. It reads: "On September 19, British Ambassador Newton and French Ambassador De Lacroix conveyed to [Czechoslovak Prime Minister] Milan Hodza the following on behalf of Chamberlain and Daladier, respectfully: 'Guided by the lofty principles of preserving peace in Europe, they consider it necessary for Germany to incorporate the Sudeten region. A system of mutual aid pacts with other countries should be cancelled.'" [4] Supposedly this betrayal of the Czech people which led to German occupation was "guided by the lofty principles of preserving peace." Yet within a year of marching into Czechoslovakia, Germany had invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and France, and bombed Britain.

Another oft-repeated lie is that the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany agreed in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to "divide Poland," again falsely implying that the pact included a commitment to take joint military action against a third country. While it is true that the Nazis invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, committing one of the worst war crimes the world has ever seen by killing about six million people, the role of the Soviet Union was entirely different. The Soviet Army marched into the territory of Poland on September 17, only after the Polish state had collapsed, the Polish army had disintegrated, the government had ceased to function, and its leaders had fled the country. Further, the Soviet Union marched into the territories of the Ukraine and Byelorussia which had been part of Soviet Russia until Poland forcibly annexed them during the Polish-Russian War of 1919-20, when Poland was one of the 14 invading imperialist countries, including Canada, that attempted but failed to strangle the newborn Soviet socialist republic. In fact, only about eight per cent of the people in the Ukraine and Byelorussia were of Polish origin.

What was the result of the Soviet Army marching into Poland? As a result of the Soviet Union's timely entry into what had been territories of the Polish state, Hitler was forced to accept a line of demarcation between his troops and the Red Army, a long way west of the then Polish-Russian frontier. [5] The Red Army saved millions of people inhabiting the Ukraine and Byelorussia from the fate which Hitler reserved for the Polish people. Even the known anti-communist Winston Churchill publicly justified the Soviet march into eastern Poland as necessary not only for the safety of the people of Poland and the Soviet Union but also the people of the Baltic states and Ukraine. On October 1, 1939, Churchill said in a public radio broadcast: "That the Russian armies should stand on this line [Curzon] was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate, the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail. When Herr von Ribbentrop was summoned to Moscow last week it was to learn the fact, and accept the fact, that the Nazi designs upon the Baltic states and upon the Ukraine must come to a dead stop."

And, of course, it was the Soviet Red Army which in January 1945 led the final freeing of Poland from the Nazi occupation, liberating Warsaw and then breaking through the formidable Nazi defences on the Vistula-Oder which marked the border of Poland and Germany. The complete success of the latter operation created the favourable conditions for entering Germany on January 20 and advancing deep into the heart of Germany, mopping up the Nazi forces, taking Berlin, and ending the existence of the Third Reich forever.

Acknowledging this huge contribution, on February 6, 1945, the President and Prime Minister of

Poland wrote to J.V. Stalin: "The Polish people will never forget that in the most difficult and trying time of their history they received fraternal help from the Soviet people not only in the form of blood and arms of the Red Army but also bread as well as tremendous assistance of an economic nature." [6]



The Soviet Red Army liberates Poland in 1945.

The nefarious actions of the Anglo-Americans and the French behind the back of the Soviet Union destroyed the existing elements of the collective security system against Nazi Germany. It was the Munich Pact signed by Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy which was the final cowardly act that triggered the Second World War, the killing of millions of people, and the European Holocaust. The judgment of history points to the truth about the Anglo-American and French betrayal of the world's people and to the truth about the heroic role of the Soviet Union and J.V. Stalin in defeating the Nazis. No falsifiers of history can change those facts.

Some 50 million people died and another 35 million were seriously wounded during the Anti-Fascist War, with the peoples of the Soviet Union bearing the brunt of the casualties. This is the truth of the matter.

Notes

1. *Falsifiers of History* by Soviet Information Bureau (Moscow: 1948).
2. See, for example, *Nazi Nexus: America's Corporate Connections to Hitler's Holocaust* by Edwin Black (Washington, DC: Dialogue Press, 2009), and *Big Business and Hitler* by Jacques R. Pauwels (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 2017).
3. "Stalin 'planned to send a million troops to stop Hitler if Britain and France agreed pact:' Stalin was 'prepared to move more than a million Soviet troops to the German border to deter Hitler's aggression just before the Second World War,'" by Nick Holdsworth, *Telegraph* (London, UK), October 18, 2008.
4. "Russian Foreign Intelligence Service Declassifies Munich Agreement Papers" by Valery Harmolenko, RIA Novosti, September 29, 2008.
5. *Causes and Lessons of the Second World War* by Hardial Bains (Toronto: MELS, 1990).
6. *World War II: Decisive Battles of the Soviet Army* by V. Larionov, N. Yeronin, B. Solovyov & V. Timokhovich (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984).